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ASHLAND, Ohio, Feb. 8, 1888.

The Great Commission.

NUMBER I.

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matth. 28:19, 20; Revised Version.

There is no more comprehensive text in the New Testament, and, certainly, not in the Old Testament, than that just quoted. Its importance, probably, was one reason why Jesus reserved it for his parting hour. He knew what is in man, and he well knew how we remember, and treasure up, and ponder the last words of our departing friends. Although he purposed to baptize them with the Holy Spirit, and had said that the Comforter should bring all things to their remembrance which he himself had taught them, yet, no doubt, he reserved this great commission for this time, so that they would think of it whenever they thought of their Lord and Master.

Another reason for reserving it for this time was that it was not according to the Divine plan to have the gospel preached to all nations until it was first preached to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and until Jesus, through his death and resurrection, had broken down the middle wall, or partition, between Jews and Gentiles. As he had redeemed all, he would now have the glad tidings of redemption and salvation preached to every creature, to "make disciples of all nations."

The text naturally divides into three heads: 1. A great command; 2. A great reason; and 3. A great promise. And it may be remarked here, that each of these divisions embraces several things; or, as the preacher would say, each division is susceptible of sub-division. I will endeavor to follow the order of the text, and first invite the reader's attention to the great reason.

1. "Therefore."

This word means, for this cause, for the cause or reason just named or specified. When we find it in this case, it is this: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth," ver. 18. Whatever else may be implied in this comprehensive declaration, it means that he was authorized to be our Redeemer,

our Savior, our Lord and Master, our Advocate, and our Judge; in short all the power and authority that are necessary for our Redeemer and Savior to exercise, both "in heaven and on earth," were given unto him by his heavenly Father, whose will and purposes he came to fulfil. Who has power to reclaim us from death? Jesus. Who has power to save us from the guilt, and power, and consequences of sin? Jesus. Who has power to reconcile us to God, to justify us in the eyes of our Maker, and to give us a home in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus. Who has authority to control our minds, and hearts, and lives? Jesus, only Jesus. Surely, then, this is reason quite sufficient why he might command his disciples to do anything that was necessary or proper for them to do, in order that his work for them, and in them, and through them, might be accomplished.

If we want to know why we should do anything that we find enjoined in the gospel, it is reason sufficient, if we can find that Jesus commanded or enjoined it. This follows, not simply because he so directs, but, also, because in so ordering he used the power and authority given him by the Father; and hence it is the Father's will, as well as, the Son's injunction.

But this great reason implies another important truth, which is this, that the authority "in heaven and on earth" is given to Jesus and only to him. Do we call him Master and Lord? If so, we do well, for so he is, and he alone. In religion we may acknowledge no one on earth as our Master but Jesus. No other man and no body of men has any power or authority to enjoin anything that he does not command or allow. Paul to the Galatians (1:8, 9) expresses it thus: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As I said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." No man, no angel, no conferences of men and no legions of angels, have any right or power to bind anything on us that is not enjoined or authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the authority of Jesus, the church may devise ways and means to carry on the great work in the world; but the church may do or inaugurate nothing that is not in harmony with the authority of Jesus. It is terrible and wicked presumption to legislate for God, and manifold more so, to legislate against God and the Son of God.

Here we might pause to review the history of church troubles, dissensions, and divisions, from the beginning; and if we were to do so, we would find that all these things have come from want of a proper appreciation of and regard for the authority and word of Jesus. By a careful examination we will find, too, that the only way under heaven to do away with these abuses and to bring about a union of Christians, is, to give proper honor to Jesus and to heed his teachings. If we look at this matter honestly, we will observe that the prospect for union and harmony is rather gloomy at present. I do not

think that men are any better now than they have been all along; and a careful survey of the past and present will but confirm the declaration that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. 8:7. It is, however, the duty of God's children, of the disciples of Jesus, to labor diligently and faithfully for union. In everything, the authority and example and teaching of Jesus should be the first consideration; for as soon as we get beyond these, we are on forbidden, strange and dangerous ground. I need not speak particularly of our own experience in the last decade, and even now, as it is painfully present in all of our hearts; but I do pray and hope that nothing may ever occur to lead us from our foundation principle, the gospel of Christ is our only law in religion, to direct us in the worship of God, in taking care of the fold, in the performance of our duties in the world.

J. W. B.

Altamont, Cal., Jan. 20, 1888.

Trine Immersion.

The three strongest arguments in favor of trine immersion have been called for, and some have responded through the columns of the EVANGELIST. To me the request has seemed to be somewhat of the character of a banter, and I could never see the propriety prescribing the number of arguments, and designating their comparative strength.

If any one is sincerely concerned in learning truth he will not concern himself so much about the number of arguments produced, or their relative strength as he will be to know whether the arguments produced, whether few or many, are sufficient to establish the truth or doctrine taught. Baptism is of no consequence whatever save only as it is based on divine authority—the word of God. If the commission given by the Savior to his disciples means trine immersion, then that is the baptism, and if it meant single immersion, or sprinkling, or pouring, then trine immersion is not Christian baptism and should not be continued in practice.

There can be no question but that the apostles baptized their converts to Christianity according to the mode given them by the Master, whether they "buried in baptism," "baptized into the death of Christ," "for the dead," or "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Neither of these expressions are irreconcilable with the idea of trine immersion as taught by the commission.

The first, second, third, and only argument that can be given for trine immersion is that it is the baptism that Christ commands. All other arguments can only be corroborative of this fact. As strong corroborative evidence I give an extract from A DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES, which is a continuation of the DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE, edited by William Smith, D. C. L., L. L. D. and Samuel Cheetham M. A., Professor of Pastoral Theology in Kings College, London. These learned men are not Dunkards or Greek Catholics, and cannot be accused of bias in favor of trine immersion. They simply state facts that cannot be honestly contro-

verted. I shall omit only the references to authorities which contain quotations from the Hebrew and Latin, which are of no interest to the general reader.

In Vol. 1, page 161, we have the following:

Immersion.

Sec. 49. -Triple Immersion, that is thrice dipping the head while standing in water, was the universal rule of the Church in early times. Of this we find proof in Africa, in Palestine, in Egypt, at Antioch and Constantinople, in Cappadocia. For the Roman usage Tertullian indirectly witnesses in the second century; St. Jerome in the fourth; Leo the Great in the fifth; and Pope Pelagius and St. Gregory the Great in the sixth. Theodolph of Orleans witnesses for the general practice in his time, the close of the eighth century. Lastly, the Apostolic Canons, so called alike in the Greek, in the Coptic, and the Latin versions, give special injunctions as to this observance, saying that any Bishop or Presbyter should be deposed who violated this rule.

Single Immersion.

Sec. 50. While trine immersion was the all but universal practice, Eunomius (circ. 360) appears to have been the first to introduce simple immersion "into the death of Christ." This practice was condemned by the canon apost. 46 [al 50]. But it comes before us again about a century later in Spain; but then, curiously enough, we find it regarded as a badge of orthodoxy in opposition of the practice of the Arians. These last kept to the issue of trine immersion, but in such a way as to set forth their own doctrine of a gradation in the three Persons. Hence arose and long continued, a diversity of practice in the orthodox churches, some following one rite and some another. Gregory the Great, when his advice upon the subject was asked by Leander, bishop of Hispala, replied that either single or trine immersion are allowable, the one setting forth the unity of the Godhead, the other the Trinity of Persons. But under the special circumstances of the Spanish churches, and in view of the fact that trine immersion was then specially the use of heretics, he thought they would do well to hold to simple immersion. But the matter was still unsettled some twenty or thirty years later. At the council of Toledo (the 4th held A. D. 633) the practice suggested by St. Gregory was laid down as the rule of the Spanish churches, and from that time onward, though triple immersion has been the prevailing practice, yet both canons of councils and writers on ritual questions have mentioned the legitimacy of simple immersion.

The Baptismal Formula.

Sec. 51. Not less necessary to valid baptism than the use of water was the pronouncing of the words prescribed by implication by our Lord in Matt. 28:19, "I baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

With the slight exceptions noticed below there has been at all times, and in all Christian bodies, a practically universal assent as to the use of these "Evangelical Words," as they are called by St. Augustine. In this we find complete assent between the Churches of the East and of the West.

Tertullian, in reference to this, appeals not to any ecclesiastical tradition, but to the direct command of our Lord.

St. Cyprian, fifty years later, uses similar language. And St. Augustine asserts that it was easier to find heretics who rejected baptism altogether than to find any who, giving baptism, used any than the generally received formula. The use of this

form was no less carefully maintained in the East. The 41st of the "Canons of the Apostles" ordered the degradation of any bishop or Presbyter who baptized otherwise than according to the commandment of the Lord and others speak of baptism as invalid if not given in these words.

The facts above set forth showing that the impartial antiquarian declares the fact that trine immersion was the all but rule of the church in early times; that simple or single immersion was introduced about A. D. 360 and that the baptismal formula as given by Christ, was cherished as "Evangelical Words," and their form adhered to with great unanimity and strictness, is the strongest kind of corroborative testimony in favor of trine immersion.

E. L. YODER.

Please renew your subscription now, or notify us whether you want the EVANGELIST continued or not.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Sister Hannah Lowman and Ida Stutzman are preaching by circulating the low priced tracts that we issue. They are mailed to any address for 25 cents per hundred. The subjects treated are the doctrines of the Brethren church, the new birth, the love feast and trine immersion.

Bro. McFaden's article, this week, is an excellent one.

Would that all might be hot on the College question and liberal enough to do their share.

Some of the notes in favor of Ashland College have passed through the hands of several agents, so that the Auditor is not sure who holds them, hence he publishes a "notice" to agents in this paper.

We would say to Bro. Bauman that a tracts would be a very useful help to our church work; but now we cannot think of any thing but the College. When that is once properly disposed of we are ready to take up these other good works.

We clip the following grand sentiment from a private letter. It is too good to be consigned to the obscurity which befalls most private correspondence, so we hope the writer will pardon. Our brother writes:

"We make no effort at economy when using water in baptism, so let us be equally extravagant with the spirit which we woo in that higher baptism. Herein we differ from the other extreme, they economize water, we, the spirit. Let us have both plentifully."

Recently Mr. Spurgeon, of London, published his two thousandth sermon.

Trans Missouri Flashes.

Jan. 25th.—Weather fine.

After a break of four days our meetings near Galesburg are resumed.

We are writing, talking and acting a daily record.

Our biography will tell for good or bad on the lives and characters of those we influence. Oh, how great our responsibilities.

We should tell the world by our actions, as well as with our tongues, that there is reality in the religion of Christ. The devil has little power beyond that of tempting.

Evil can only be destroyed by opposite influences. Thus idols, covetousness, can only be overcome by liberal ity.

The great question is not how must we feel, or what must our opinion be, but "what must we do to be saved."

The thing necessary for a stingy church member is conversion.

I wonder whether Bro. Beer's article—"Help Wanted," will have the desired effect.

The dark cloud which hung over the Pleasant Valley Church, Kansas, has been partially dispelled.

The Pleasant Valley church, having put itself on record as to assistance. The writer has agreed to take pastoral charge of it during the present ecclesiastical year, ending Oct. 1, 1888.

Isn't it strange that people should desire more time to decide whether to be good or bad? Whether to go to heaven or hell?